

BOARD OF EDUCATION
31 GREEN STREET
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY OFFICE

11/13/70

Hon. Sharpe James
City Hall
Newark, N. J.

Dear Mr. James:

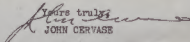
Your charge of payroll padding by the Superintendent of Schools at the meeting of the Board of Schools Estimate yesterday is, in effect, a charge against the Board of Education. As a member of the board and as chairman of its finance committee, I know this is not a fact and must, in defense of my integrity, refute your unfounded charge.

To support your charge, you cite the fact that principals who have been removed from their schools because of community pressure, have been assigned to the Department of Reference and Research or to small schools that do not need principals. You fail to say, however, that a principal cannot be legally removed merely because "residents" do not like him. You know that his right to work is fully protected by the laws governing education and civil service and his removal is beyond the control of the superintendent or the board.

I have always maintained that it is poor educational practice to remove a principal merely because of "complaints lodged by residents" without proof of professional incompetence. Merely because a resident has ideas about running a school different than the principal has, does not prove that the resident is right and the principal is wrong.

Many wrongs have been committed by the board against its professional employees because of community pressure based upon misunderstanding of the operation of the school system. Decisions made under pressure are unsound.

As a public official, you know that your criticism is unfounded and amounts to a grandstand play for public consumption.

Yours truly

JOHN CERVASE



**SHARPE JAMES
COUNCILMAN
NEWARK, N.J. 07102**



November
Sixteen
19 70

Mr. John Cervase
Finance Committee
Board of Education
31 Green Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Mr. Cervase:

I am in receipt of your letter and/or press release of November 13, 1970, and deeply regret the fact that you are not knowledgeable of what is going on encompassing payroll padding. Also, in the future if you are really concerned about the issues, and truly wish an answer, please afford me the opportunity to reply prior to going to the press. Your motives are suspect.

Therefore, your charge that my "criticism is unfounded and amounts to a grandstand play for public consumption," unfortunately is a typical Cervase statement, that highlights your ineffectiveness and or participation on board matters.

In retrospect, to make you knowledgeable, please be advised that payroll padding is a reality in the persons of Mrs. Mildred Johnson, Mr. Maurice Lutzke, and Miss Marion Smith, all of whom are receiving salaries not commensurate with their duties and responsibilities. There are many others as well. For your personal inspection and information, I am taking the liberty of enclosing a supporting memorandum from the office of the Superintendent of Schools.

Moreover, you are begging the question to discuss the how and why of the removal of various principals, inasmuch as this is not a concern of the Board of School Estimate as for priority. I strongly suggest that you take this matter up with Mr. Titus because the fact remains that they were removed.



SHARPE JAMES
COUNCILMAN
NEWARK, N.J. 07102



Mr. John Cervase

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And finally, I am completely taken aback by your continuous watch dog role of the Board of Education notwithstanding moral issues, and your offer of rebuttal and rhetoric as opposed to solutions to the problems. Mr. Cervase, I suggest that you seriously work to relieve overcrowded classrooms, reverse the 32 per cent drop out rate, develop a meaningful drug abuse program, and strive to bring quality in education and opportunity to the majority of students as opposed to educating a few.

It's time that you come down from your ivory tower and deal with real people in the real world. It's time for butter not bricks, compassion not arrogance, and warmth not coldness. How long can a divided City last? How long must our children wait for quality in education? How long will we continue to defend the ills of our educational system?

In closing, the sixty four thousand dollar question is simply, why your erroneous conclusions in the comfort of a before the fact press release, when you were in attendance at the Board of School Estimate Meeting, sitting some ten feet away from the mike? Why did you not pose this information before the public and submit to cross examination and feedback? I hope this is not a conditioned perfunctory response on your part.

Thanking you for this consideration, I remain,

Respectfully yours,

Sharpe James
Sharpe James

cc: Board of School Estimate
Board of Education
Municipal Council

BOARD OF EDUCATION
31 GREEN STREET
NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

November 17, 1970

Honorable Sharpe James
Councilman
City Hall
Newark, New Jersey

Dear Mr. James:

I regret your emotional letter of November 17th and I categorically reply thereto.

I am fully acquainted with what is going on in the matter of your so-called payroll padding charges. I am as concerned about the issues as you are and suggest that you stop making unfounded charges of payroll padding. Your motives are suspect; it was you who first published the charges at a public meeting.

To support your charges you cite transfer of three principals from their schools to the Department of Reference and Research. As a City official, you must know that these principals were removed in response to community pressure. There were no charges preferred against them for professional incompetence and the Board was powerless to suspend or remove them in the absence of any substantiated charges. Nor was there any legal justification to fire them without violating their Constitutional and Civil Rights. The Board, therefore, was left with the alternative of transferring them, with their consent, to posts at the Central Office until they

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NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

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could be re-assigned to other schools. The only other alternative would be to relieve them of their duties with pay which the law compels.

You charge me with ineffectiveness as a Board Member. This is an emotional, unfounded charge. I might ask you what have you done of significance since you were elected to the City Council.

You are concerned with my attitude toward moral issues and my contribution toward solution of problems. I express the same concern about you in your capacity as a Member of the City Council. I have seen nothing constructive or of any consequence in your record as a councilman. On the contrary, I have seen an emotional approach in your handling of problems effecting the social welfare of the people of Newark.

You say that it is time I come down from my ivory tower and deal with the real people in the real world. I have never been in an ivory tower. I am a product of the slums and the public schools of Newark. I have dealt with real people in the real world when you were still an infant. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Urban League of Essex County in the days when people insulted whites for helping blacks, I helped stop

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the press from referring to your people as Negroes in their news stories. I helped stop the practice of accepting want ads which discriminated against blacks. I succeeded in getting industry and commerce to employ blacks in other then menial jobs. I helped write and push for the passage of the first Civil Rights Law in this state in 1945. I challenged the Board of Education in 1950 to change district lines in order to integrate schools; it did.

It was as a result of this latter effort that I was invited to become a Member of the Urban League Board.

As a Member of the Board of Education these past five and one half years I have voted for every black appointment recommended by the Superintendent and am now pushing for the appointment of Duke Brown and William Brown while your fellow blacks on the Board oppose me.

I could go on but will not bore you with the details. If you care to get together with me personally I shall be pleased.

Respectfully yours,



John Cervase
Board Member

JC:ek

cc: Board of School Estimate
Newark Municipal Council
Board of Education
Mr. Titus

NEWARK MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

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PRESIDENT

MICHAEL A. BONTENPO
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COUNCILMAN CENTRAL WARD

November
Twenty
1970

Mr. John Cervase
Finance Committee
Board of Education
31 Green Street
Newark, New Jersey 07102

Dear Mr. Cervase:

I am in receipt of your 17 November letter and/or double spaced press release. Again your first letter to the press was suspect, and this one is a genuine classic exercise in "evade the issue and attack philosophy" of the past, notwithstanding the truth of the situation. Briefly, I dissect these summary remarks from your letter:

- (1) You are fully acquainted and agree with payroll padding for lack of a solution to the problem by the Board of Education.
- (2) You attack my performance as a member of the Newark Municipal Council.
- (3) You tell how much good you have done for Blacks.
- (4) You castigate fellow Blacks on the Board of Education for not agreeing with you on a personnel matter.

Unlike your letter-writing habit of creating issues to make favorable remarks on, I will deal specifically with the above:

- (1) As a member of the Board of School Estimate, I am still unequivocally opposed to teachers, principals and/or administrators receiving salaries not commensurate with their duties and responsibilities. The taxpayers should not be asked to pay the freight for a spoils system of keeping transferred personnel at same salary while

November 20, 1970

performing significantly less duties. Please note enclosed press clipping on the action of another Board of Education.

- (2) I find it rather amusing that you would attack my record on the City Council while having never attended or spoken at said meetings, and you do not partake in the affairs of the South Ward. Are you a prophet? What is my voting record? Thus again from the comfort of your living room and typewriter are you the master to judge my performance? Oh well, I know the charge Mr. Cervese, any Black who speaks out is labeled highly emotional, a militant, uninformed, un-american and just plain bad for the community. However, I must remind you that the days of stuttering and shuffling, Amos and Andy, scratching and bewitching days are gone forever. I hope you will not continue with your present day philosophy of a "good nigger" being one who agrees with you and a "bad nigger" being one who disagrees with you? With your permission, of course, I prefer to let those citizens in the South Ward who elected me to public office be my judge and not Mr. Cervese.
- (3) It interests me that in your letter you made it a black and white issue while attacking me personally. I would be more impressed if you told me what you have done for people, inasmuch as I hear your enclosed remarks daily from the likes of Wallace in Alabama, Meddow in Georgia and Thurman in South Carolina. Of course, history will point out, that those who profess to do so much for Blacks, do so out of pity and a feeling of white supremacy as opposed to a legitimate concern for his fellow man. Tokenism is the name of the game! Moreover, in your letter you "brag" about voting for every Black appointment recommended by the Superintendent.

I pose the question: "Did you vote for these men because they were competent and qualified or merely because they were Black? If the former, why pat yourself on the back? If the latter, why the appointment?" Come Mr. Cervese, there is but one race-the human race- stop rewarding yourself for tokenism and perfunctory membership in Black organizations. How about that discriminatory White organization you belong to? Let's deal with the issue of payroll padding. We will never look upon you as Dr. Martin Luther King or John Brown.

November 20, 1970

- (4) Unlike you I would never insult the intelligence of my colleagues by assuming that because they are Black, they must and should support every Black candidate before them on board matters. How dare you deny them the right of their vote encompassing conscience and irrespective of color. Who made you master to reprimand them for not agreeing with you? Should your opinion be the majority ruling and do you not see the need for a BOARD of Education? Mr. Cervase, have you told them what "bad boys and girls" they are for not agreeing with you? I personally respect and defend their right to vote as they see fit in the American tradition. Do you recommend a change in this procedure?

Finally, in true master-servant tradition, you are trying to have the last word and/or camouflage your premature and erroneous charges, while defending payroll padding. Mr. Cervase, please be advised that "to err" is human. Why beat a dead horse?

In closing, we still need help, not words and action, not past deeds. I call upon you to deal with the problems of Madison Avenue School as made known to me at a P.T.A. and Title One meeting held on November 17, 1970:

- (a) A window has been broken for some ten years. (See Mr. Malbrock - the Principal) Window repair needed.
- (b) They have only one refrigerator for the cafeteria. Also there is need for improvement in the cafeteria facilities.
- (c) A need for an intercom system in the Madison Avenue Annex.
- (d) They have asked that the only 4th grade class in Madison Avenue be assigned to the Madison Avenue Annex. Mr. Titus made an appointment to meet with Mrs. Beulah Thomas and others on this matter and failed to show up. (See P.T.A. President).
- (e) The vice principal asked whatever happened to a possible \$400,000 appropriation for the rehabilitation of Madison Avenue School?

The educational problems of Newark are too serious to waste time projecting one's self image.

Respectfully yours,

Shari James
Shari James

cc: Board of School Estimate
Newark Municipal Council
Board of Education

Mr. Franklyn Titus
Mr. Harold Ashby
Community Organizations

BOARD OF EDUCATION

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY 07102

FRANKLYN TITUS

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

EDWARD I. PFEFFER

DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

September 21, 1970

Memorandum to: Mr. Franklyn Titus
Superintendent of Schools

From: EDWARD I. PFEFFER *E.I.P.*

Here is the information requested by Councilman Sharpe James.

Project WHO at West Side High School:

Sal Salerno, Director
Salary: \$16,100
Enrollment: 100 pupils

School-Within-a-School at South Side High School:

Leo Litzky, Principal, is in charge of South Side High School and the School-Within-a-School

Federal funds totaling \$59,539 were approved on September 2, 1970, for a 12 month director. Position not yet filled.

Salary: \$19,320

Enrollment: 215 pupils which will increase to a total of approximately 400 by 1972.

Maple Avenue Annex

Geraldine Sims, Acting Principal
Salary: \$16,720
Enrollment: 616

✓ Speedway Avenue

Marion Smith, Principal
Salary: \$19,665
Enrollment: 247

✓ Madison Avenue Annex

Maurice Lutzke, Principal

Salary: \$19,665

Enrollment: 250

✓ Status of Mildred Johnson

Mildred Johnson, Principal

Salary: \$19,665

Assigned to Department of Reference & Research

Status of Ralph Caputo

Ralph Caputo, Teacher

Salary: \$10,900

Assigned to Department of Reference & Research